

part of the book. When speaking of compression (p. 197) he says: "Depressed bone should be elevated, foreign bodies extracted, pus evacuated by trephining, extravasated blood removed and further bleeding prevented by opening the skull, turning out the clots, and tying the vessel. *These operative procedures are proper only when the existence of compression is clearly established, and its cause and location known*" (italics ours). This last position is that of the older surgeons, and is not consistent with the following extract from the table, for example: "In closed comminuted fracture, with evident depression and *without brain symptoms* (italics ours), incise scalp and trephine." There is difficulty in learning from the work just what the writer's real views are, partly because of peculiarities of arrangement. Some general account of operative indications and contra-indications according to symptoms is given under the heading of localization. Other mention is made under compression, and too little that is definite when speaking of fracture. He looks upon incision of the scalp and trephining as "exploratory rather than therapeutic measures." "Trephining properly performed is in itself so free of danger that in a doubtful case the patient had better be trephined than allowed to run the risk of death, epilepsy, or insanity." On this ground opinions still differ, and time alone, with accumulated statistics of aseptic operations, can decide. The procedures here advocated are possibly safe in skilled hands, such as the author's. In a general work on surgery a clearer statement of other views might not be out of place.

An extremely lucid and sensible discussion of fractures of the lower end of the radius deserves mention. Bond's splint, it is said, should never be used, but the moulded metal splint of Levis, a straight anterior splint with a wooden pad for the radial curve, or a single straight dorsal splint, should be employed.

The book is one of a class which is much needed to-day; a surgery written from the standpoint of an active man who has not been too loath to unlearn the methods of the past.

Especially to be commended is the judgment used in selecting illustrations. Many excellent ones are original and add greatly to the clearness of the text.

G. E. S.

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ELECTRICITY IN THE DISEASES OF WOMEN, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE APPLICATION OF STRONG CURRENTS. By G. BETTON MASSEY, M.D., Physician to the Gynecological Department of Howard Hospital, etc. Second Edition, revised and enlarged. Pp. xii., 240. Philadelphia and London: F. A. Davis, Publisher, 1890.

THE appearance of a second edition of this little book within a surprisingly short time after the first is a convincing proof of the general interest of the subject. Believing that there is more in the work than would appear from the hasty way in which it has been discussed by former reviewers, we have felt disposed to consider it at some length, in view of the growing importance of the matter of which it treats. The fact that the author is an enthusiast, and that, as such, he has been brought into frequent antagonism with the ultra-surgical party of

gynecologists, should in no way detract from the candid reader's appreciation of his conservative attitude. The results of electro-therapy have been in the main discredited either by those who have allowed themselves to be prejudiced against it without examining into its claims at all, or by others whose adverse criticism has been founded upon insufficient evidence. In this department of medicine, as in every other, the accumulated experience of trustworthy observers should always be accepted as outweighing the results of those who report a few isolated cases. We view with suspicion the deductions of a laparotomist which he bases upon a dozen cases; why should we not be equally distrustful of a writer who, after treating half a dozen cases of uterine fibroid according to Apostoli's method (as he conceives), feels competent to publish a sweeping denial of its value? On the other hand, the intelligent practitioner must be no less suspicious of the electrical enthusiast who affirms that no pelvic affection can resist the influence of the subtle agent which has become such a potent factor in therapeutics.

Since the main features of this manual were set forth in the notice of the first edition it is unnecessary to comment upon them. Much new matter has been added, showing the results of the author's personal experience in the treatment of other pelvic diseases than those which were before mentioned. Over half of the volume is devoted to theoretical considerations, descriptions of apparatus, mode of application, etc., all of which are briefly but clearly stated, as is fitting in a popular work. Chapter V., containing details with regard to the preparation and after-treatment of patients, is especially valuable.

Chapter XI. (including forty-three pages) receives the attention which its importance demands. The author's conclusions, based upon his personal experience of the electrical treatment of these tumors, are certainly not extravagant. He believes that:

1. "A properly-conducted electrical treatment of solid fibroids is harmless, will remove the irritation and pain due to their presence, arrest further growth, and almost invariably cause a gradual diminution in their size.
2. Bleeding fibroids may be entirely cured of the hæmorrhagic tendency and pain, arrested in growth, and gradually lessened in size.
3. It is possible for the diminution in the size of the tumor to end only in its complete disappearance.
4. In small intra-mural fibroids, surrounded by unimpaired uterine tissue, the current applications tend to promote their disengagement from the uterine stroma, and extrusion either into the uterine or peritoneal cavities. In the former case a complete cure may result by a delivery of the tumor, and in the latter case a lessening of its symptomatic importance.
5. The time necessary for a satisfactory shrinkage should not be too sparingly measured with the slow cases. Quick symptomatic cure and slow shrinkage are often associated in the same case.
6. In fibroid tumors that have undergone cystic degeneration a treatment by strong currents may do harm, being apt to set up changes in the liquid contents of the cavities that may result in septicæmia."

The author thinks that the electrical current causes trophic changes in the growth, or, as he happily expresses it, "the electrical applications are like blows upon a nerve containing trophic filaments, which are followed by degeneration and absorption of the supplied area in proportion to the injury." He properly prefers intra-uterine cauterization to electro-puncture per vaginam, reserving the latter for cases in which

the cavity is so small that an electrode cannot be introduced, or in which the tumor is subperitoneal and pedunculated. Very hard tumors are less adapted for electrical treatment. The best results are to be expected in the case of submucous fibroids. Several cases are reported showing the favorable results obtained, especially as regards the relief of hæmorrhage, the tumor in every instance being considerably reduced in size.

Chapter XII., on uterine hæmorrhage, is condensed but valuable. The results obtained by the author in the electrical treatment of chronic endometritis are certainly most encouraging; but even conservative gynecologists would question the possibility of curing an extensive bilateral laceration of the cervix without an operation. In introducing the important chapter on chronic inflammatory diseases of the uterine appendages the author throws down the gage to the laparotomists. He is not far from right when he says that "a conservative reaction from this war-time in abdominal surgery may be predicted with confidence." On the other hand, however positive may be the results obtained in the electrical treatment of ovarian troubles, we can hardly assent to the view that a well-recognized pyosalpinx should be treated by the electrode instead of the knife, even though there has been no recent perimetritis.

With the author's remarks on pelvic pain we are in full accord, though it is a matter for regret that so little space is assigned to this important subject. We believe that in the relief of this symptom the electrical treatment has achieved its greatest triumphs, as opposed to empirical surgery, and it is reasonable to suppose that its benefits will in time be so generally recognized that laparotomy, as a tentative measure, when no serious organic disease is recognized, will in the near future be regarded as absolutely contra-indicated. Under the section on "Menorrhagiæ" (a term which is suggested as a substitute for dysmenorrhœa, though it presents no striking advantages over the latter) the author discusses the etiology of painful menstruation, which he designates somewhat vaguely as "almost entirely a neuro-muscular phenomenon." "Menorrhspasm," or spasmodic contraction of the os internum, is described in rather ponderous terms as "a neuro-myotic storm of the uterine neuro-muscular apparatus, which renders the excretion of the menstrual fluid temporarily impossible." This theory is tenable, but there is danger that the general reader may infer that divulsion is an operation to be entirely abandoned. Much as it has been abused, we would be sorry to see such conclusions drawn, since in a certain class of cases (especially when the question of sterility is concerned, as well as that of dysmenorrhœa) there is a permanent mechanical, as well as a purely spasmodic, obstruction of the cervical canal. The author's views regarding the inadvisability of hasty resort to local treatment in the case of young girls meet with our hearty approval.

In the chapter on the electrical treatment of uterine displacements expression is given to the belief that there is a future for this method in cases of prolapsus due to relaxations of the muscular supports of the uterus. This we must admit when we reflect how much has been accomplished by pelvic massage, which is necessarily less efficient in its action.

Chapter XVII., on extra-uterine pregnancy, is brief, and somewhat disappointing in view of the importance which this subject has assumed of late. We are pleased to note that the author, unlike some enthusiastic electro-theraputists, recognizes the fact that there are limitations

and contra-indications to the application of his favorite agent. He does not extend its use to pelvic abscess, hæmatocele, and cysts of the ovary and broad ligaments. In fact, his claims are, with few exceptions, reasonable and are urged in a calm, judicious spirit, which commends itself to the impartial reader far more than intemperate advocacy of any method.

This work is necessarily limited in its scope, and is much condensed. For the general practitioner the theoretical predominates a little too much over the clinical. We have our doubts as to the propriety of advising practitioners to procure and use the nice apparatus needed in the electrical treatment of uterine fibroids. Personally, we believe that even gynecologists would do better to entrust their cases to special workers, who have the time and experience necessary to test thoroughly the value of this treatment. The tendencies of the average gynecologist are too surgical to allow him to spend the time which should be devoted to Apostoli's method before it becomes evident that a given case cannot be benefited except by an operation. On the other hand, the application of electricity to ovarian and pelvic neuralgia requires less complicated apparatus, less special skill, and may well be entrusted to the general practitioner.

The author does not promise too much, but calls attention clearly to the fact that there is still much to be learned regarding the special application of this agent in gynecology.

Modest and unpretentious as it is, the book is a valuable addition to the literature of gynecology, and deserves the general approbation which it has received.

H. C. C.

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DESCRIPTION OF THE JOHNS HOPKINS HOSPITAL. By JOHN S. BILLINGS, M.D. Baltimore, 1890.

TIME and space will permit only a brief notice of the splendid edifice of the Johns Hopkins Hospital. It stands the model hospital of the world, as perfect as art and science and munificence can make it in our day. The handsome volume which describes it is itself a triumph of skill. It contains, besides a concise narrative of the inception, construction, and completion of the hospital, the addresses delivered at the opening of the institution, May 7, 1889, by Francis T. King, President of the Board of Trustees, and Dr. John S. Billings, who has been from the first the moving spirit, the *genius loci*, of the entire evolution. To the text of the volume are appended fifty-six elaborate plates that serve to illustrate every detail of the structure.

It is not likely that this great hospital will be many times duplicated. The ignorance and poverty of municipalities will long hinder the establishment in our large cities of public buildings like these; and few private charities can compass such results. But the influence of such an exemplar will be far-reaching and permanent. Already, before a single stone had been laid, the construction of hospital buildings throughout the country was modified by the crude preliminary plans that were drawn up at the instance of the trustees of the Hopkins